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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Letter dated 12 May 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the texts of two statements issued by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 7 May 1993 concerning the extension of the maritime zone around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (see annex I) and the conservation of marine resources in the area in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (see annex II).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 36 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) D. H. A. HANNAY

* A/48/50.

ANNEX I

Text of a statement issued by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 7 May 1993 concerning the extension of the maritime zone around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

In recent years, Her Majesty's Government has become increasingly concerned about the conservation of marine resources around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in the South Atlantic, which is a British Dependent Territory. Until 7 May this year, the Crown's sovereignty and jurisdiction around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands extended to the 12-mile limit of the territorial sea. For waters beyond this, we had relied solely on the work of the Commission created by the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), a component of the Antarctic Treaty System. This depends on flag State regulation and policing to apply conservation measures decided by consensus amongst the 22 members. We fully support CCAMLR and cooperate in the body's work. We have worked most energetically to strengthen the role of CCAMLR in its regulation of southern ocean fisheries. Although CCAMLR has provided timely and much-needed protection for commercially-fished species, we are concerned that nevertheless fish stocks have been depleted.

Moreover, infringements of CCAMLR regulations have grown. The need to reinforce conservation arrangements in the area for which Her Majesty's Government is responsible is clear. Accordingly, Ministers decided to strengthen conservation and management of marine resources around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands by the introduction of national measures. These measures are intended to supplement, not replace, the role of CCAMLR and are of course fully compatible with it.

For this reason, the Commissioner for South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands issued a Proclamation on 7 May 1993 to provide for the exercise of the Crown's sovereign rights to jurisdiction over a maritime zone. This action will reinforce existing measures under CCAMLR.

Since their re-establishment in 1990, our relations with Argentina have progressed to their present excellent state and are now marked by a new openness and growing mutual confidence. This is a source of great satisfaction to Her Majesty's Government, which will continue to work to develop the relationship further. Against this background, it was natural for us to discuss our concerns over conservation fully with the Argentine Government, with which we have extensive exchanges on South Atlantic matters, particularly in relation to fisheries. We look forward to pursuing this dialogue.

ANNEX II

Text of a further statement issued by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 7 May 1993 concerning the conservation of marine resources

The Argentine Republic has today reasserted its purported claims in respect of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the waters surrounding those Islands. In enacting its Law No. 23968 in November 1991, the Argentine Republic repeated those claims to jurisdiction over the maritime areas concerned over which the United Kingdom has sovereign rights in international law. Her Majesty's Government does not accept such Argentine claims. We have no doubts about our sovereignty over South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and our consequent entitlements to maritime jurisdiction in accordance with international law around that territory.

Her Majesty's Government recognizes the strength and importance of the continuing relationship with Argentina, places a high value on the continuing strength of those relations and acknowledges the need to work together for mutual benefit and the achievement of conservation objectives in the South Atlantic. Her Majesty's Government is committed to tight conservation controls in the waters covered by the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and supports the continuing and effective role of the Commission established by that Convention.